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Recognizing Foster Care Month

Foster parents, relatives, and family friends provide stable, loving environments to keep families strong

MADISON – Today there are over 6,800 Wisconsin children in out-of-home care, with 87% being in a home setting thanks to the dedication and support of foster parents, relatives, and family friends. To raise awareness and acknowledge the collective efforts of those involved with foster care, Governor Evers has proclaimed May as Foster Care Month.

“While our goal is to keep children within their home, we know that sometimes other supportive services are needed,” said Department of Children and Families (DCF) Secretary Emilie Amundson. “When this occurs, keeping children and youth connected to their family, their community, and their cultural roots is critical to them thriving. Thankfully, Wisconsin is full of passionate and dedicated county and tribal child welfare agencies, as well as foster parents, relatives, and family friends, who work tirelessly to ensure this happens.”

Since 2018, Wisconsin has been working to transform its child welfare system into one that uplifts and empowers families. To do this, state, county, tribal, and community partners have been putting more emphasis on building preventive programs and services that keep children and families connected and in home-like settings whenever possible. Since making this shift, the state has seen a 9.5% decrease in the number of children in out-of-home care and a 17.6% decrease in children placed in congregate care settings, such as group homes and shelters.

“Forty percent of children in out-of-home care are currently living with relatives or family friends,” said Wendy Henderson, DCF’s Division of Safety of Safety and Permanence administrator. “This means more children are placed with family who already know their favorite food, how to help them fall asleep, or how to make them smile. We are excited to see this increased trend and look forward to a day where more children are placed with relatives and people who know and love them.”

During the month of May, Governor Evers and DCF will celebrate Wisconsin’s foster parents, relative caregivers, and family friends by recognizing outstanding caregivers and former foster youth during the 2022 Governor’s Foster Care awards ceremony on Tuesday, May 24, at the State Capitol.

Additionally, a mural made by current and former foster youth will be on display in the State Capitol rotunda throughout the month of May to raise awareness on the importance of sibling connections. The mural, which includes 16 unique pieces, was made in 2021 by sibling groups at Camp to Belong Wisconsin, an organization dedicated to reuniting brothers and sisters who have become separated in foster care, through a week of camp in the summer and other events throughout the year.

To learn more about becoming a foster parent or Wisconsin's Kinship Care and Subsidized Guardianship programs, visit www.dcf.wisconsin.gov or follow @WisDCF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About Camp to Belong Wisconsin

Camp to Belong–Wisconsin, Inc. (CTB-WI) is a member camp under the umbrella of Camp to Belong International and is dedicated to reuniting brothers and sisters who have become separated in foster care through a week of camp in the summer and other events throughout the year. Through its signature event programming, CTB-WI works to strengthen the sibling relationship by providing youth with a place to connect, create memories, and normalize the experiences of placement into foster care. CTB-WI is co-directed by Kate and Rob Bauer and is currently hosted at Camp Anokijig in Plymouth.

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